Puppets are a hit at playgrounds, rec centers

A bolt of lightning almost brought the curtain down last year. But Oakland County's Puppet Mobile is back on the road, braving the ele-ments to entertain kids all summer

Working out of playgrounds and Working out or projector.

Working out or projector. The puppet show on wheels is part of a mobile recreation fleet run by Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission. Other trailers offer sports, roller skating and a show

Shaggy Rudyard gets a hug from an enthusiastic fan

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"EYE of the NEEDLE" (R)

nearby — the puppeteers didn't hesi-tate to sign up again for the outdoor performances.

ryou allmost nave to half to make one pup other.' sal always a different audience, never the same group twice," said puppleteer Brad Lowe, whose Lowe-Hamilton Puppet Theatre is featured on the Puppet Mobile. "Even older folks appreciate it. The show reaches just about everyone." Shagg Rudyard and his stagehand newphew Stymie are stars of the shows put on by Lowe and Boot Hamilton, both Avon Township residents. Also behalf the stage and Thick Henry of Fornita. The troupe, who call themselves The troupe, who call themselves "children's entertainment specialists," with Lowe three years ago. They also

You almost have to split your brain in half to make one puppet react to the

puppeteer

perform regularly at the Spaghetti Company restaurant in Livonia. "There's not always a message, al-though sometimes we can slip in a mo-rality lesson."

ONE OF THE audience favorites is the "Frog Prince." Its main character is an enchanted frog who used to be a

prince.
So that they will be more believable,

prince.

The state of the state

SPECIAL WORKSHOPS follow each performance put on by the puppet mobile, so that youngsters will see how the puppets are created.

To encourage youngsters to stage their own puppet shows, kids are given paper bags and taught how to make puppets. The puppeteers request only one thing in return: "Don't litter."

Dedicated to quality entertainment for kids, the puppeteers want children to "get something" out of their pro-grams. And they see puppets as an ex-cellent medium to achieve that goal.

adults will to a puppet. It's a fantastic-type thing," explained Mrs. Henry. For Lowe, puppeteering is serious business. "It's just like being an actor," but instead of you acting, your puppet does the acting," he explained. "You almost have to split your brain in half to make one puppet react to the other."



Shaggy greets a youngster at a performance of the touring Oakland County pupper mobile.

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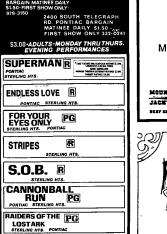
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